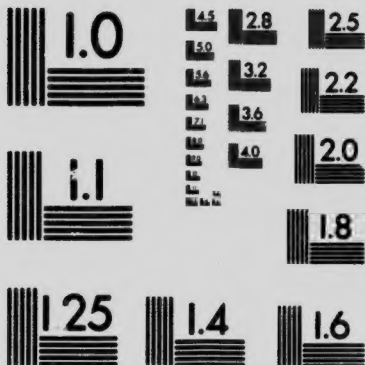




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VITTORIA BAPTIST CHURCH.



Sunday, November 20th.

Centenary Sermons—

Principal McCrimmon, B.A., Woodstock.

11 a.m. Hymns—

- No. 1. "O Worship the King."
66. "O God our Help in Ages Past."
98. "God of our Strength."

7 p.m. Hymns—

- No. 161. "All Hail the Power."
151. "Crown Him with many
Crowns."
362. "Abide with Me."

Special Thank-Offerings.

Monday, November 21st.

10 a.m.—

Reunion of Members
Prayer and Praise Service.
Roll Call.
Reading of Letters from Absent Ones.
Memorial Service for those "Gone Home."

5.30 p.m. to 8 p.m.—Tea.

Historic Sketch, "One Hundred Years."
—Pastor.
Song, "One Hundred Years Ago."
—Deacon E. M. Kitchen.
Reminiscences by the "Pioneers."
Address, "The Bi-Centennial—What?"
—Rev. J. C. Sycamore, Hamilton.



"I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the Increase."

Pastors—1804-1904.

Rev. Titus Finch.....1804-1827
 " Geo. J. Ryerse.....1829—
 " Wm. MacDormand .1832-1833
 " Simon Mabee.....1834-1835
 " James Stewart.....1835-1836
 " Wm. Smith1836-1838
 " Simon Mabee.....1838-1839
 " Wm. MacDormand .1839-1840
 " A. C. Barrell1841-184
 " Wm. Rees1842-1843

Rev. Isaac Elliott.....1843-1844
 " Priestly Nichols.....1844-1845
 " S. Olney.....1845-1847
 " J. Ryerse.....1847-1848
 " Abram Duncan.....1848-1855
 " —. Walker.....1855-1856
 " Jno. Rowe1856-1859
 " David Gastellow.....1859-1860
 " Thomas Baldwin....1860-1863
 " Patrick Clerihew...1864-1865

Rev. J. E. Vining.....1866-1868
 " Henry Cocks.....1868-1873
 " Thos. Sinclair.....1873-1880
 " David Reddick.....1880-1884
 " Wm. McGregor.....1884-1886
 " C. H. Phillimore....1886-1887
 " L. Newton.....1887-1893
 " Thomas Shields....1894-1898
 " David Bovington....1898-1901
 " Thomas Doolittle...1901—



"Men of good report, full of the Spirit, and of Wisdom." Acts 6: 3.

Deacons—1804-1904.

Deacon Laurence Johnston
 " Samuel Smith
 " Abraham Smith
 " Joseph Kitchen
 " John Chadwick
 " —. Hatch
 " Chas. Gustin
 " Robert Haven
 " Peter Mabee

Deacon Daniel Smith
 " John Shearer
 " Oliver Mabee
 " William H. Ryerse
 " David Shearer
 " Albert Terhune
 " Alex. Teeple
 " Gabriel Mabee
 " Thomas Marshall

Deacon E. M. Kitchen
 " Wm. Finch
 " Charles Shearer
 " John Pow
 " R. Y. Mabee
 " Walter Chadwick
 " Donald Fisher
 " Philip Young

Historic Sketch of Vittoria Baptist Church 1804-1904

ONE HUNDRED YEARS! In 1791, chiefly through agitation on the part of U. E. Loyalists, who had at this time in a large number settled in Western Canada, there was organized the new Province of Upper Canada. In the following year Governor Simcoe divided this new Province into nineteen counties, the sixteenth in the list being named Norfolk, then an unbroken wilderness, stretching from Grand River to Catfish Creek, including that section known afterwards as "The Long Point Settlement." This country—one hundred years before, Galince, a sulpician priest, designated "The Terrestrial Paradise of Canada." Up to 1792 there is no evidence that a cabin had ever been erected within Norfolk's present bounds by a permanent settler. The history of Vittoria Baptist Church begins with the coming of the first settlers, and is inseparably connected with the laying of its foundations and subsequent history. Some who became charter members of the pioneer Baptist Church of Charlotteville, as it was first named, were piloted through the forest wilderness to their new homes by Indian guides. Heroes and heroines every one! Coming from New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, New Brunswick, etc.

The nucleus of this sketch was formed by the Reverend Titus Finch. Titus Finch was a family offshoot of Jno. Finch, speaker in the unmanageable Parliament of Charles I in 1626, where with undaunted courage and loyalty he espoused the cause of the King. During the war of American Independence he came with his regiment to America, to fight for old King George III. Mr. Finch was a very religious soldier, and never entered an engagement without having first invoked the Divine blessing upon the undertaking. At the close of the war he was dismissed from service at Halifax, and found his way to a settlement of Baptists in Nova Scotia, where he was subsequently ordained by that body to preach the Gospel. In 1798 Elder Titus Finch came to the settlement and erected his log cabin near Vittoria, on the bank of Young's Creek, and took up the double task of land-clearing and preaching to his fellow-settlers. For the first six years he did a purely

Missionary work in co-operation with the American Missionaries, who occasionally visited the district in their touring. In 1804 sufficient material had been gathered to warrant organization, when in joint action with the Shaftsbury Association of New York (represented by one Rev. Samuel Coville, of Pittstown), the pioneer church of Western Ontario became a fact of history. Unfortunately, the minutes of this old historic body for the first sixteen years of its existence perished with those who recorded them. Tradition, with some satisfactory authenticity, says the council for organization was held in the log cabin of one Oliver Mabee. Its foundation was of God. The names of thirty (30) of the forty constituent members previous to 1820 have been gleaned from one source and another, which list will be heard with keen interest by many of you :—

Abigail Barber
 Titus Finch and Wife
 Richard Lanning and Wife
 Oliver Mabee and Wife
 Levi Montross and Wife
 Abraham Smith and Wife
 Isaac Smith
 Solomon Smith
 Squire Teeple and Wife
 Jno. Gustin and Wife

Laurence Johnston and Wife
 Joseph Merrill and Wife
 Andrew MacCleish and Wife
 Samuel Smith and Wife
 Thomas Smith
 Jessie Smith
 Robert Shearer
 Robert Henderson
 John Stone

These forty souls were the fruits of the first Pastor—the soldier minister. Yet his ministry was not confined to the Vittoria church; he was directed by the church in local missionary tours : first to Woodstock, then to Aylmer. This good work this good man continued for more than a quarter of a century.

Owen, in his "Sketches" gives a description by an eye witness, of a pioneer "meetin." "I remember the meeting at Uncle Powell's when I was only seven years old. It seems only yesterday, I remember it so distinctly. The meeting was held by a missionary named Jno. Youmans, and when we got there he was sitting on a splint-bottomed chair, behind a little board table that had a tallow candle on it. It was a cold night and it seems as though I can hear the fire snap and crack in that big fireplace now. It was a small log

house with only one room. The bed had been taken down and put out of the way, and split slab seats put up for the people to sit on. I sat on a little stool by the side of my mother and next to the fireplace. When the neighbors had all come in Mr. Youmans opened the meeting. They did not have hymn books, but everybody, old, young, big and little, took part in the singing. The Elder read two lines of the hymn and then some one would start the tune, and before the middle of the first line was reached all the people would be singing with all their might. This was repeated until the hymn was finished. I can see the sparkling flames leap up and disappear in that old fireplace now, just as I saw them so many years ago, as I knelt by the side of my little stool and listened to the prayer of the missionary and the hearty "Amen" that came from the benches. After reading a portion of Scripture, Elder Youmans commenced his exhortation by pointing towards Uncle Powell and shouting: "Father Abraham, who have you in heaven? Methodists? No. Presbyterians? No. Episcopalians? No. Universalists? No. Baptists? No. Who then in the name of God have you in heaven? 'CHRISTIANS' shouted the Elder in a loud voice. This novel way of introducing his subject made a lasting impression on my childish mind and I have never forgotten it."

These early fathers certainly were imbued with the spirit of necessity to obey the Divine injunction "Go ye." The church was quick to discern missionary qualifications in a member, and straightway sent him forth, bearing the Gospel message to the outlying districts, providing for his maintainance. This practice remained a settled policy for many years and is a partial explanation of the marvellous work of extension that the church records.

The first house for public worship was a log structure. In 1807 it was decided to rebuild on a site immediately to the east and north of the village, so a commodious frame building, with a three-sided gallery superseded the original. In this new meeting-house the young people attended singing school. Among a few old papers still intact a number of receipts for payments on "meeting house accounts" are found, also a deed for an acre of land on which to build a meeting-house, and in which to bury the dead, bearing the date 1807. This deed was made by Oliver Mabree to Peter Teeple and Laurence Johnston, Trustees; in consideration of £2 and 10s. to be used by the Baptist Society of Charlotteville, in connection with Shaftsbury Association for

church purposes only." The subscription runs thus :—Samuel Smith, 527 lbs. wheat ; O. Mabee, 5 bushels rye ; T. Smith, £3 New York Currency ; L. Johnston, £1 16s. ; R. Shearer, £8 ; another for £14 7s. 9d. ; Jno. Gustin, £5 ; Jos. Merrill, 28s. 2d. So they lengthened their cords and strengthened their stakes. It can scarcely be said that the church had a settled pastoral oversight during its first fifty years. At one period Charlotteville was one of five administered to by Elder McDormand. The church minutes of the twenties and thirties record a plurality of Elders who visited the church, preached, conducted protracted meetings and administered the ordinances. Pastors were engaged to preach one, two or perhaps three Sabbaths of the month, and the remaining, at outlying points. It was incumbent upon the deacons to conduct the services in the absence of any minister, and these were admonished by the church to improve their public address that they might speak to edification.

The pastorates were fickle, with continuous changes, some lasting but a month, many less than six. The explanation for this condition is found in the fact that ministers were few, stipulated salaries meagre, irregularly paid, and not in a few instances withheld until resignation was a necessity. The donation of a suit of black clothes was the annual obligation of the church to its earliest pastor—(it is not stated to have been second-hand). The longest settled pastorate in the whole history of the church is for a period less than seven years.

From its inception the church exercised careful and rigid watch over its members, and throughout, manifested a glowing jealousy that each member should adorn the Gospel he professed in his daily walk and conversation. They thought more and made more of public means of grace than we do. Attendance at the preaching service, the prayer meeting, the monthly covenant meeting and communion service was compulsory.

From the many interesting records I glean that "April 18th, 1855, was set apart as a day for prayer and fasting." July 30th, 1830—"Resolved, that any member absenting himself from covenant meeting (which was held monthly), shall be inquired after and visited by the church." Also a Resolution authorizing the deacons "to tax all the members according to their ability." This Resolution in varied form appears throughout the minutes time and time again. Aug. 18th, 1832—"Resolved, that J. O—— be excluded for not attending public worship, having been previously 'labored' with." Dec. 23rd, 1833—"Resolved, that as

there has been hardness and difficulties in the church, that each feels to ask forgiveness and to forgive and bury all past difficulties and close our ears against all talking." Dec. 24th, 1842—"Resolved, that if any member or members be found guilty of reviling or finding fault with any of the doings of the church, such person or persons will be considered offenders, until full satisfaction be given for the injury done to the honor and dignity of the church." Under date of June 22nd, 1844—"Resolved, that we authorize Deacon Peter Mabee to get a candle-box and one half dozen candlesticks and reflectors for the use of the church, same to be paid for from the funds of the church." January 3rd, 1849—"Resolved, that in the exercise of political rights professed by the members of this church, it will from henceforth be no reproach to them." In 1829, composing a council called by the church to ordain Geo. J. Ryerse, is the name of Samuel Doolittle, grand uncle of the present pastor, as delegate representing the old Whitby Church, forty miles east of Toronto.

In the January minutes of 1851 appears an account of "a meeting called to consider the advisability of building a new place of worship, with Pastor Duncan in the Chair, and Bro. David Shearer, Clerk, pro tem. Moved by Deacon Daniel B. Smith, seconded by Deacon Oliver Mabee, that the church erect a new edifice in Vittoria, that we appoint Deacons Smith, Shearer and Mabee, a committee to solicit subscriptions from members and friends, to secure pledges for building purposes." January 21st of the same year, a "Building Committee" of seven was appointed: Daniel B. Smith, O. Mabee, Jr., T. Lamport, Alex. Teeple, Peter Young, Albert Terhune and W. H. Ryerse, with Bro. Thos. Lamport, Convener, and Deacon Jno. Shearer acting with the Committee in the selection of a suitable building site. The old frame structure on the hill was sold for forty dollars and fifty cents (\$40.50), the land being our present burial ground. The proposed new brick building (still occupied), was formally dedicated and opened for public service on Sunday, May 30th, 1852. The preachers for the occasion were Pastor Abraham Duncan and Elder George Ryerse, the church from this date being known as "Vittoria" Baptist Church. She has been visited by many seasons of gracious revival and ingathering, and the record of reaping a score or half hundred converts is of frequent mention. Between 1820 and 1840, one hundred and forty-nine were baptized. It may be a surprise to some that the full membership totals fifteen hundred and twenty-four (1524). It retains to-day a membership of one hundred and ninety (190). Vittoria is a mother of churches—a mother prolific. In 1828 thirty-one members

were dismissed to form a new church in Walsingham, now Port Rowan. In 1830 other thirteen went out for a similar purpose and organized at Stony Creek. In 1835 thirty-three were granted letters of dismissal to form a church at Middleton (now Delhi), one of these, Deacon Frederick Sovereign, donating the land upon which the church was built. Delhi claims Principal McCrimmon among her sons, and Vittoria claims him among her grandsons. In 1836 forty were dismissed to form the Kerne Settlement Church, now Forrestville; Port Dover Church (now extinct), was an offshoot of this branch. In the organization of the Simcoe Baptist Church in 1847, Vittoria gave eight of the thirteen constituent members, and it was a member of this church who so substantially aided the Simcoe brethren in the purchase of the site of the present edifice, Miss M. J. Mabee. Simcoe's honored son, Ralph E. Smith, now laboring among the heathen Telugus, is a grandson of Daniel Smith already mentioned. Eight of the charter members forming Walsh Church came from Vittoria. These, and many others there are in whose beginnings she has played a lesser part, such as Wilkesport, Snyderville (now represented in the foreign field in the person of Miss Selman). We also find the names of Mabee, Kitchen and Smith composing the council at the formation of the Canadian Literary Institute of Woodstock, and Burtch who donated the land upon which the College stands.

A century ago this pioneer church was organized. To-day there are over thirty Baptist churches in Norfolk, with a membership exceeding thirty-two hundred. Her sons as members, officers and pastors are found in the churches throughout the Dominion and United States. The influence for Christ that this organization has exerted in this locality, upon the Baptist denomination of Canada, upon this continent, and upon the world, eternity alone will tell.

PASTOR DOOLITTLE.